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Time

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Time

An alarm clock can only indicate the time of day, not whether we are early or late for getting out of bed. We provide the meaning, and we assign value to our time-governed activities. A good timepiece rarely gains or loses even a second during a day, but we might say that “there are not enough hours in the day” when we like what we are doing, or “time passes too slowly” when we are impatient to be finished.

Whether or not we wear a wristwatch, most of us are not far from indications of time, whether clocks or digital time notations are visible around us, or we receive audible signals that remind us of time-connected events, such as through computer software and handheld electronic devices, as well as announcements on radio and Television. Rarely, except by conscious choice, are we in situations where we have no concern about the time of day or night relative to what we are doing.

Time is a measure, but of another sort than the size and weight of physical materials that we can add to or subtract from as we wish. We cannot change the length of a minute or shorten the duration of an hour. We can stay up later or rise earlier than usual, but we cannot manipulate the speed at which a day or night passes. But if we choose to reflect on the subject of time, we will have easy access to spiritual considerations.

Since time is not under our control any more than is the weather, we have to make appropriate adaptations which are analogous with faith. We only need practical knowledge concerning length when deciding to get a ladder for grasping something higher than our arms can reach. But if we take into account the limited time we have available for sleep, and decide to cut short our evening activities so that we can rise earlier the next morning for some quiet time of reflection and prayer, we are clearly exercising trust in our spiritual knowledge of values and priorities. Similarly, if instead of frustrating ourselves by trying to accomplish everything on our “to-do” list on a given day, we decide to trust that the limited time available serves as a guide and channel for the valuable work we can peacefully accomplish, we are exercising spiritual judgment.

Time is not an enemy that orders us around, but a gift of God that we are free to spend as we choose. If we look at what we do with much of our time, we might note whether or not we spend it in ways that we value. Also, we could wonder whether hours of sleep, or performing mindless ordinary chores, or being incapacitated by illness have any value, especially when compared to accomplishing things that “count” in our world. But whose perspective will we take when we evaluate the use of all our minutes and

hours? If we consider that the gift of time comes from the same source of all that exists, we might take consolation from the thought that we are neither the only nor the best judges of how our time is spent.

Perhaps this is a time for us to be grateful that Love is that best judge.